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Book Calendar

Tuesday

Santa Monica City Hall. Charles Solomon reviews John Canemaker's "Winsor McCay: His Life and Art," 2nd Floor Council Chambers, 1685 Main St., 1:30 p.m.

Hollywood. Sherley Anne Williams signs "Dessa Rose," B. Dalton Books, 6743 Hollywood Blvd., 5-6 p.m.

Wednesday

KPFK. Cherie Lewis interviews author Alan Dershowitz, 90.7 FM, 2 p.m.

Friday

D. H. Lawrence, 1885

Hollywood. Used book sale, Cahuenga Public Library, 4591 Santa Monica Blvd., near Vermont Ave., 10 a.m.-3 p.m., continuing Saturday.

Laguna Beach Public Library. Judy Altschule Lieber reads from her poetry, 363 Glenneyre, 8 p.m.

Santa Ana. Fred Voss and Mary Carden read from their poetry, Educational Conference Room, Bowers Museum Center, 2036 N. Main St., $3, 8 p.m.

Saturday

Hermosa Beach Public Library. Used book sale, 550 Pier Ave., 9:30 a.m.

Fullerton. Joan Dial ("Eagles in the Wind") discusses her writing, Sizzler Restaurant, 1401 N. Harbor Blvd., 1 p.m.

Museum of Contemporary Art. Dennis Hopper signs "Out of the Sixties," 152 N. Grand Ave., 2-5 p.m.

Santa Monica. Julian May signs his books, A Change of Hobbit, 1853 Lincoln Blvd., 4-6 p.m.

Downtown. David Antin and Richard Meltzer read from their poetry, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, 1804 Industrial St., 10 p.m.

Send notices for Book Calendar to Alex Raksin, Book Review, Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles 90053 no later than 11 days before issue date.

Now in Paperback

The Best of Japan: Innovations, Present and Future, edited by Moritaka Matsumura (Kodansha/Harper & Row; $24.95). This catalogue of Japanese products recently given the Nikkei newspaper award for excellence is great fun to read—alternately telling, humorous and amazing (disposable lens-equipped film, a car that measures faults in the road with the front wheels and then uses a microcomputer to adjust the air suspension of the rear wheels to absorb even the tiniest shock). Yet, while most Americans will see "The Best of Japan" as a brochure of wonders suggesting that the future is here and living in Tokyo, the Japanese view it altogether differently—for them, it is a hopeful tract, for their nation's economic dominance in the world is being undermined by a strong yen, trade restrictions in the United States and growing competition from South Korea and Taiwan, where labor is cheaper.

Japan's economic success has been based largely on sustained growth in mass production. Now, with competition curtailing growth, the Japanese are finding new strategies. The emphasis today is on creating technology, not copying it. Since this is essentially a publicity catalogue, it will be hard for readers in the United States to determine which inventions actually originated in Japan. But these gadgets remain interesting for the way they show similarities between our two cultures (a company official who thought it would be fun "for people to lead the life of cats" invented a concept even dumber than Cabbage Patch Dolls—a fake cat's paw that curls electronically; 980,000 paws were sold in six months) and differences (a "community oriented shopping center has fairy-tale architecture, a round-roofed gymnasium, a community church, statues of traditional local deities, 20,000 trees and shrubs and a musical fountain).

Awakenings, Oliver Sacks (Summit; $18.95; hardcover reprint). As with Oliver Sacks' other spirited ruminations on man, medicine and mind—from "A Leg to Stand On" to "A Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales"—this book works on several levels. Sacks wrote "Awakenings" in 1973 to demonstrate the effectiveness of the drug L-DOPA in helping patients battle Parkinson's disease. On this level, the book is somewhat dry, recounting before and after stories that attest to moderate degrees of success. But "Awakenings" is, on a much livelier level, an attack on the way neurologists envisioned Parkinson's disease as simply a motor disorder, ignoring the fact that most patients also experienced "a corresponding slowness or stickiness of mind, with the thought-stream as slow and sluggish as the motor stream." The neurologists erred, Sacks writes, because they "tended to see the motor, the intellectual, the perceptual, and the emotional in quite separate and non-communicating compartments of the brain and, given a concept or prejudice like this, could not see an awakening, could not see or describe things as a whole." Since the cognitive and emotional confusion was difficult to pinpoint, it was not sufficiently empirical and thus was overlooked.

Sacks doesn't state this directly in the original edition, and the reason is ironic; had he done so, this book would have been deemed normative (non-empirical) by the scientific Establishment and thus ignored. But in a lively preface composed for this edition, lengthy enough to turn this book into a speculation on the way medicine is practiced and perceived today, Sacks speaks his mind more directly: "We rationalize, we dissimilate, we pretend that modern medicine is a rational science . . . but we have only to tap its glossy veneer for it to split wide open and reveal to us its roots and foundations, its old dark heart of metaphysics, mysticism, magic and myth."

Our Mutual Room: Modern Literary Portraits of the Opposite Sex, edited by Emily Ellison and Jane B. Hill (Peachtree Publishers, 494 Armour Circle, N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30324; $14.95). The "mutual room" of the title refers to Moses Soyer's 1935 painting "Artists at the WPA," which shows men and women drawing and talking near canvas and easel. As the editors see it, Soyer's depiction of harmony in the midst of the Great Depression suggests that artistic camaraderie between the sexes can help us through baffling times. Yet, while interplay between the sexes is the solution, it is also the problem, for the characters in the novels excerpted here suffer from a confusion over male and female roles that emerged after the sexual revolution. Many of today's women authors, the editors point out, "create male characters who are drifting, who seem dangerously lost, while male writers create female characters whose danger comes from being so anchored. The men want stability, the women want escape."

How have we managed to sink into this social mire after the promise of the 1960s? A likely explanation was forwarded last year by Reynolds Price, who contends that contemporary writers are actually far more reluctant to cross the gender gap than were Henry James, Emily Bronte, Mary Shelley and Willa Cather, not to mention the Elizabethan and Jacobean theater. Price blames this modern reluctance on a backlash against the role confusion created by the women's movement. The editors convincingly refute Price's claim that male writers are more willing to cross the gap than women, but Price's belief that we are still wandering is left unchallenged. Instead, "Our Mutual Room" ends with the unrealistic hope that the empathy displayed by modern American writers will in itself be enough to suggest viable answers. (Perhaps the high degree of awareness of underlying male anxieties displayed by women authors in these pages will only heighten male insecurities.) The book's impact also is diminished by the editors' decision not to ground contemporary American images in history or in world culture. All in all, though, the stories in "Our Mutual Room" spotlight changes in sex roles today more effectively than many nonfiction pop sociology texts.

Requiem on Cerro Maravilla: The Police Murders in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Government Cover-up, Manuel Suarez (Waterfront Press, 52 Maple Ave., Maplewood, N.J. 07040; $9.95). Despite statements by members of the U.S. Department of Justice and aggressive, credible reporting by Manuel Suarez, a staff writer for the San Juan Star in Puerto Rico and a correspondent for The New York Times, our government's possible complicity in covering up the investigation of the Cerro Maravilla murders remains one of the Caribbean region's best-kept secrets. Cerro Maravilla is a mountaintop in southern Puerto Rico where, on July 25, 1978, Puerto Rican police killed two young *independistas*, political radicals fighting for the island's independence from the United States. FBI investigators and Carlos Romero Barcelo, the governor and leader of a party that wants Puerto Rico to become a U.S. state, found no wrongdoing after several "in-depth" investigations. After Suarez, citizens and members of the Puerto Rican Senate all found numerous inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the FBI and Romero Barcelo reports, however, several police officers were convicted and imprisoned for luring the *independistas* to the deserted mountaintop. Many in the island nation still suspect higher level involvement, though, and so the investigation continues in full force today. While the murders might seem old news, this book remains interesting as a study of how the Monroe Doctrine has evolved and why Latin Americans both love and hate their behemoth neighbor in the north.

—ALEX RAKSIN

And Our Critics Commend

Beloved, Toni Morrison (Knopf). Without "Beloved," the story of an escaped slave living with her daughter, her mother-in-law and an enchanting intruder, "our imagination of the nation's self has a hole in it big enough to die from" (John Leonard).

Touch, Elmore Leonard (Arbor House). "A classy mystery. It has guns, sex, con artists, intrigue and what one has come to expect in an Elmore Leonard novel, crackling dialogue gleaned from the stuff of life" (Philip C. Rule).

The Quarterback Speaks to His God, Herbert Wilner (Cayuse Press, P.O. Box 9086, Berkeley, Calif. 94709). This book about people "poised on the fulcrum of life and death [is] . . . both powerful and heartbreaking in its intense desire to see, to understand and to record, literally before it's too late" (Carolyn See).

Best Intentions: The Education and Killing of Edmund Perry, Robert Sam Anson (Random House). A "concerned, evenhanded and conscientious" account of why "an exceptional kid happened to die an ugly punk's death" (Elaine Kendall).

Best Sellers

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Placement on national list is noted in parentheses.

FICTION

1. **Presumed Innocent**, Turow (1)
2. **Patriot Games**, Clancy (2)
3. **Legacy**, Michener (5)
4. **Misery**, King (3)
5. **Sarum**, Rutherfurd (6)
6. **Weep No More, My Lady**, Clark (4)
7. **Postcards From the Edge**, Fisher (9)
8. **Sphere**, Crichton (11)
9. **Hot Flashes**, Raskin
10. **The Five Bells and Bladebone**, Grimes (10)
11. **The Prince of Tides**, Conroy (14)
12. **Freedom**, Safire
13. **Team Yankee**, Coyle
14. **Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency**, Adams (7)
15. **More Die of Heartbreak**, Bellow

The National Best-Seller List also includes **Windmills of the Gods**, Sheldon (8), **Fine Things**, Steel (12), **The Haunted Mesa**, L'Amour (13) and **Flight of the Old Dog**, Brown (15).

GENERAL

1. **Spycatcher**, Wright (1)
2. **The Closing of the American Mind**, Bloom (3)
3. **The Great Depression of 1990**, Batra (2)
4. **Love, Medicine and Miracles**, Siegel (4)
5. **Call Me Anna**, Duke and Turan (5)
6. **It's All in the Playing**, MacLaine
7. **How to Marry the Man of Your Choice**, Kent (9)
8. **The Eight-Week Cholesterol Cure**, Kowalski (7)
9. **Cultural Literacy**, Hirsch (6)
10. **A Woman of Egypt**, Sadat (10)
11. **Hammer**, Hammer with Lyndon
12. **Straight on Till Morning**, Lovell
13. **Family**, Bombeck
14. **Communion**, Strieber (8)
15. **Men Who Can't Love**, Carter (14)

The National Best-Seller List also includes **The 35-Plus Diet for Women**, Spodnik and Gibbons (11), **How to Be Your Own Nutritionist**, Berger (12), **A Day in the Life of America**, Smolan and Cohen (13) and **Witness to a Century**, Seldes (15).

MASS-MARKET PAPERBACK

1. **Red Storm Rising**, Clancy (2)
2. **It**, King (1)
3. **Suspects**, Caunitz (6)
4. **Hollywood Husbands**, Collins (4)
5. **His Way**, Kelley (8)
6. **Wanderlust**, Steel (3)
7. **Through a Glass Darkly**, Koen (5)
8. **Texas**, Michener
9. **The Hunt for Red October**, Clancy (7)
10. **Twilight Eyes**, Koontz (9)

The National Best-Seller List also includes **Regrets Only**, Quinn (10).

TRADE PAPERBACK

1. **The Road Less Traveled**, Peck (5)
2. **Billy and the Boingers Bootleg**, Breathed (1)
3. **The Book of Questions**, Stock (2)
4. **West With the Night**, Markham
5. **Dianetics**, Hubbard

The National Best-Seller List also includes **Calvin and Hobbes**, Watterson (3) and **Rand McNally 1987 Road Atlas** (4).

The Southern California Paperback Best-Seller list is based on The Times' survey of regional bookstore chains and major paperback distributors. Placement on national list is based on surveys by Publishers Weekly and is noted in parentheses.

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